

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, BG, US

SUBJECT: U.S. DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE IN DACCA

1. DURING MY CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON LAST OCTOBER I AGREED TO LOOK INTO THE ADVISABILITY OF ESTABLISHING A DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE IN DACCA AND REPORT MY RECOMMENDATIONS. THESE FOLLOW.

2. WHILE THERE ARE SOME POSSIBLE POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN OPENING A DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE IN DACCA, I BELIEVE THESE CAN BE HANDLED IF CAREFUL CONSIDERATION IS GIVEN TO THE PROBLEM OF TIMING. I AM CONVINCED THAT I VERY MUCH NEED EXPERTISE ON MILITARY MATTERS BUILT INTO THIS MISSION. THIS WOULD BE A MAJOR HELP TO ME IN DEALING WITH THE LOCAL MILITARY LEADERSHIP, WHICH IS THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF POWER IN BANGLADESH TODAY. WHILE REPORTING ON THE BANGLADESH MILITARY BY VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THIS MISSION IN THE PAST HAS MET MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS, I BELIEVE WE NOW NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS ALL IMPORTANT GROUP. THE RIGHT KIND OF ATTACHE WOULD HAVE EASY ACCESS TO MANY OF THE BANGLADESH MILITARY AND WOULD HELP US FILL IMPORTANT GAPS IN OUR KNOWLEDGE OF ATTITUDES AND FRICTIONS WITHIN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

3. I WOULD HOPE THE ATTACHE WOULD ALSO HELP US

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AND THE BDG STRUCTURE A GOOD MILITARY TRAINING

PROGRAM. THIS PROGRAM IS NOW SCHEDULED TO START IN FY 78 BUT I VERY MUCH HOPE SOMETHING CAN GET UNDERWAY IN FY 77.

4. AS A RESULT OF ALL THESE FACTORS, I RECOMMEND THAT AN ATTACHE OFFICE BE OPENED IN DACCA IN THE SPRING OF 1977. I RECOMMEND ALSO THAT THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA APPLY:

A. THE OFFICE SHOULD BE HEADED BY A LT. COLONEL. AN OFFICER OF LOWER RANK WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN GAINING ACCESS TO THE HIGHER MILITARY CIRCLES IN BANGLADESH AND OPENING THE OFFICE WITH AN OFFICER OF LOWER RANK MIGHT, IN FACT, BE VIEWED AS A SLIGHT BY SENIOR BANGLADESHI OFFICERS GIVEN THE HIGH RANK OF OTHER ATTACHES IN DACCA.

B. THE OFFICE SHOULD BE SMALL. I WOULD THINK THAT ONE OFFICER, A NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER, AND A DRIVER WOULD BE ADEQUATE. THE EMBASSY CAN PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.

C. THE OFFICER SELECTED SHOULD BE AWARE OF LOCAL POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES AND THE FACT THAT TOO MUCH ACTIVITY OR THE WRONG TYPE OF ACTIVITY WOULD CREATE SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS. I REALIZE THIS IS THE CASE AT MANY POSTS, BUT THE DANGERS ARE ACCENTUATED HERE BY THE FACT THAT THE OFFICE WOULD BE NEW AND VERY MUCH UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT AT A TIME WHEN THE BANGLADESHI MILITARY ARE INCREASING THEIR ROLE IN GOVERNMENT. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, I HOPE WE COULD GET A FORMER FAST STUDENT TO HEAD THE OFFICE.

D. WE SHOULD DELAY ANY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE. IT IS STILL TOO CLOSE TO ZIA'S OPEN ASSUMPTION OF AUTHORITY, AND WE WOULD NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO BE RUSHING INTOO QUICKLY. MOREOVER, INTELLIGENCE SOURCES REPORT THAT CHINA MAY BE IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING A MILITARY ATTACHE OFFICE. IF WE OPEN BEFORE THEY DO, OUR ACTION COULD BE USED BY CHINA AS JUSTIFICATION FOR BRINGING IN THEIR OWN MILITARY ATTACHE. I WOULD RATHER HAVE THE REVERSE

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SITUATION IF POSSIBLE.

5. ZIA HAS RAISED THIS WITH ME ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WITHIN THE PAST MONTH, AS HAS ADMIRAL KHAN. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE DECISION TO OPEN A DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE HERE HAS BEEN ON AGAIN - OFF AGAIN DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS. I UNDERSTAND THERE ARE FUNDING PROBLEMS, BUT I HOPE THESE CAN

BE WORKED OUT SO I CAN TELL ZIA SOON THAT WE WILL
DEFINITELY OPEN AN OFFICE DURING THE FIRST SIX
MONTHS OF THE COMING YEAR.
MASTERS

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